

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 824.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1879.

PRICE 1½d.

RAILWAY PILFERINGS.

In a previous article ('Railway Claimants') we drew attention to one heavy item of expense in the half-yearly balance-sheets of all large railway Companies—to that, namely, which is incurred for the settlement of merchandise claims; and endeavoured to shew how liable the Companies were to be imposed upon by such claims being in many cases grossly exaggerated and little better than bare-faced attempts at swindling. We now propose to deal with the same item of expense from another point of view, and shew that a liberal percentage of the amount so paid may be set down as a consequence of the numerous losses and pilferages of goods by the railway Companies' own servants.

It may be taken as granted, we think, that nearly one-half of the employés of a railway Company are more or less directly engaged in the handling of goods-traffic, either in the loading or unloading of it, in its collection and delivery at the different depôts, or with the charge of it while in transit from one point of the line to another. For their own sakes and for the protection of their customers' property while in their custody, the Companies are naturally anxious that the men whom they engage to fill such subordinate positions as porters, carmen, and shunters should be possessed of antecedents that will bear the brunt of careful investigation. Yet notwithstanding every precaution, black-sheep will occasionally creep into the fold; while others originally honest and reputable, but weak-minded, are led astray in time by drink or evil companionship, till they end by becoming the tools or accomplices of rogues less scrupulous than themselves.

It may surprise an outsider to be told that a number of private constables and detectives are constantly employed by railway Companies to look after their property and that of their customers; yet despite all this care and vigilance, the amount paid for claims by the Companies in the course of a year, arising from pilferages or carelessness on the part of their own servants, is something more surprising still.

Owing to an unexpected flush of traffic, a Company will sometimes be called upon to engage a considerable number of extra hands without having previously had time to inquire into their characters and antecedents. This being well known to the gangs of loafers who infest all large centres of industry, and who when not temporarily employed at one terminus are on the look-out for a job at another, it can hardly be wondered at that the number of pilferages increases in something like a corresponding ratio. In many cases the thieves are never discovered, and many are the ingenious ruses made use of by them to escape detection; while equally clever are some of the modes adopted to bring the culprits within the grasp of the law.

Among the minor class of pilferages, one of the most frequent and most annoying is the robbery of cheese. After every fair, the produce of the different dairies—ranging say from fifty to five hundred cheeses—is distributed by rail to various parts of the country; but on reaching their destination it is frequently found that two or three of the cheeses have mysteriously disappeared in transit; and very rarely is any clue found which leads to the discovery of the thieves. So numerous some few years ago had the cheese robberies become on a certain line, that the expedient was at length adopted of sending a constable in one of the trucks, who lying there hidden, might naturally hope to catch the culprits in the act of purloining. The man slipped in under the sheet of the wagon at the last moment, taking with him his truncheon, a dark-lantern, and a pair of handcuffs, and was well provisioned for his long and uncomfortable journey. Three times a week for some two or three months was Mr Constable jolted about in his dark hiding-place from one part of the line to another without a single capture rewarding his labours.

The following instance of what might almost be termed retributive justice happened some years ago near one of the largest railway depôts in the heart of England. One or another of the wagons travelling by a certain night-train had several

times been broken into and robbed of its miscellaneous contents. The train was a through one, running between London and several large towns in the north of England; but the exigencies of the traffic necessitated its being shunted on to the sidings for an hour or more at two or three different parts of the line; and though it was nearly certain that the robberies took place at one or another of these compulsory stopping-places *en route*, it was not easy to discover the precise spot. A watch was set, but to no purpose. The *modus operandi* of the thief was to cut a slit in one of the sheets, large enough for a man to creep through. Once inside, the contents of the truck were ransacked, and such articles selected as were likely to be of some value and yet not too bulky to be carried away. The articles were then pitched out, and the man followed, after readjusting the sheet as far as he was able. The presumption was that the stolen property was then rolled down the embankment and hidden away in some dry ditch or hedge-bottom till it could be safely 'lifted.' It has been found from experience that a large proportion of railway robberies, despite the watchfulness of guard and driver, are committed at lonely sidings during the long dark nights of winter, and so no doubt it was in the present case; the difficulty being to find out when and where; but it was a difficulty that solved itself in a very curious way. One morning at daybreak the dead body of a man, with his chest crushed in, was picked up on one of the sidings; near him were strewn some half-dozen packages or parcels of goods addressed to different consignees. There could be no doubt that he was the thief. It was supposed that after throwing the goods out of the truck he had been about to follow them, when the engine giving a sudden jerk at the train, caused him to overbalance himself, and that in falling he was caught between the buffers and crushed to death on the spot. He proved to be a workman employed at one of the Company's 'shops,' and had been noted as a quiet, steady-going man, who never seemed to have much to say to his neighbours. When his house came to be searched, stolen property of the value of more than a hundred pounds was found secreted in it.

A short time ago, a series of robberies took place from certain trains travelling between two particular points. The chief of the railway police, who had the case in hand, after much quiet investigation, made up his mind that the pilferages occurred at a certain junction where the trains left one Company's line and passed on to that of another. At this point the trains were generally delayed an hour or two for shunting and other purposes. Within a mile of the junction was a small roadside station which employed some half-dozen hands in all, and not far from the station was a public-house. Feeling pretty sure that neither guards nor drivers were implicated in the matter, the superintendent of police called one of his trusty men to his side. 'Wheeler,' he said, 'I

understand that now and then you are addicted to taking a drop too much?'

Wheeler coloured up, coughed behind his hand, and then said in a hesitating sort of way: 'Well, sir, I don't mean to deny that once or twice I'—

'That will do, Wheeler. It is quite evident that now and then you are troubled with a dryness of the throat. You will take the six o'clock train and go down to the station at B— Junction. At the station you will let it be known that to-night you intend to be on the look-out for the thieves who have robbed the down-train so frequently of late. After a little chat, you will go across the way to the *Stanhope Arms*, and if you take with you any of the men who are not too busy to be spared, so much the better. You will stay at the *Stanhope Arms*; and when the station shuts up for the night, which it does as soon as the ten o'clock train has passed, the rest of the men will no doubt follow you there, especially if you let them see that you are one of the right sort, and not above treating them to a pint or two. Don't give the men too much to drink, but drink as much as you like yourself—in fact I want you to get as tipsy as you possibly can.'

'Do you mean me really to get tipsy, sir?' asked Wheeler in bewilderment.

'Of course I do. As tipsy as ever you were in your life.'

'But if I do that, how can I look after the thieves?'

'Do as I tell you and ask no questions. You will become intoxicated, stay at the *Stanhope Arms* all night, return to your duty as soon as you are sufficiently recovered to do so, and give me a bill for your expenses.'

Wheeler scratched his head for a moment, and then went without a word. It was his duty to obey instructions; and he did obey them. He took the train as far as B— Junction, and on alighting told the station-master, in the hearing of one or two of the porters, that he had been sent down to see whether he couldn't lay hands on those plaguy thieves who had robbed the down-train so often of late. Meanwhile, as nothing could be done till after midnight, he would go to the *Stanhope Arms* and have a pint and a quiet pipe.

In the little bar-parlour where he sat in the chimney corner, Wheeler was by-and-by joined by the foreman porter. Later on, three more of the station hands came straggling in. Wheeler treated them to drink, but partook of three times as much as any of them. As long as his articulation was tolerably clear, he kept his audience amused by recounting one yarn after another; but after a time neither he nor they knew quite well what he was talking about.

Still bearing in mind his chief's instructions, he struggled manfully with the task before him; but at length his pipe dropped from his fingers, his head fell forward on to the table; and it was quite evident to all there that Mr Wheeler was help-

lessly intoxicated. The men sniggered among themselves. 'A nice sort o' chap he is to come thief-catching!' said one.

'He's safe for the night anyhow,' said another. 'He'll not trouble anybody before daylight.'

'You'd better help me to lay him on the settle, lads,' said the landlord. 'With a pillow and a blanket he'll take no harm till morning.'

Soon after daybreak, Wheeler's slumbers were disturbed by a violent shaking. Opening his eyes, he saw his chief standing before him. 'Get up; you're wanted,' said the latter.

Yawning and rubbing his eyes, he stumbled out into the passage; but what he saw there made him rub them still harder. Before him stood three men handcuffed, two of whom he recognised as having been among his boon-companions of the previous night.

The superintendent's ruse had succeeded. Rightly calculating that the thieves—if the men he suspected were really the thieves—would take advantage of Wheeler's drunkenness, feeling themselves perfectly safe for once, and would make a foray that very night, he had followed his subordinate by the next train with two more men, and leaving the line at a station short of B—, had driven the remaining distance in a hired trap, so that no one at B— had the slightest suspicion of his presence in the neighbourhood. Planting himself and his men in three likely positions shortly before midnight, he had there awaited the course of events; with what result we have seen.

A few months later, the same superintendent effected another rather clever capture of a railway thief. At a certain large goods-terminus the mysterious disappearance of one or more packages had for some time been a matter of almost daily occurrence. The lost articles were chiefly medium-sized parcels, often samples of silk or velvet goods, and not too bulky for one man to carry off without difficulty. The goods in all cases had been received at the terminus, checked from the truck on to the stage, and there left for a few hours, while waiting to be loaded up and delivered to the consignees. When the time came for the delivery of the parcels, they could not be found; nor for a time was there any clue to the thief or thieves, and Mr Superintendent was much exercised in his mind thereby. The day and night watchmen were changed, fresh men being put in their places, but still the pilferages went on with undiminished vigour. Extra watchmen were placed in hiding behind large piles of goods conveniently left for the purpose; but all without effect. While walking about the goods-shed one day, intent upon some other business, the superintendent noticed that in a certain place some of the planking which faced the space between the ground and the floor of the platform, a height of about three feet, looked loose, and as if it had been recently disturbed. On trying the planks, he found that he could move them aside without much difficulty, and that then a dark cavity between the ground and the floor of the platform was exposed to view. Sending one of his men for a dark-lantern, and taking care that his actions were not observed, the superintendent proceeded to make an exploration of the cavity, crawling into it

on his hands and knees—fortunately he was only a little man—and taking the lantern with him. Presently, he emerged, his face one broad grin of satisfaction. 'We shall cop 'em after all, Jack,' he said to his man as he replaced the planking and walked away.

Late the same night, attended by his trusty subordinate, but without the knowledge of even the watchman on duty, the superintendent went back to the cavity under the stage and crept into it again. His man then replaced the planking and left him. Hour after hour passed, and the superintendent became horribly tired of his position. The space was so confined that he could not even sit up. He was compelled to lie extended at full length, and could only vary his position by turning from his left side on to his right. But between three and four o'clock, when the first sounds of the coming day's work were beginning to be heard, and the lamps on the up-side were being lighted, his patience was rewarded. That part of the shed where he was hiding was still in semi-darkness when he heard the sounds of footsteps coming nearer and nearer. 'My heart never beat before as it did at that moment,' said the superintendent afterwards, when recounting the adventure. 'The footsteps stopped opposite my hiding-place. There was a moment's pause, and then the loose boards were pushed aside, and a hand holding a parcel tied up with string and brown paper was thrust into the hole. There was just light enough from the lamps on the opposite side for me to see what I was about. I had previously got my handcuffs out, and had fastened one ring of them round one of the iron supports of the platform. The moment the fellow thrust his hand into the hole, I knocked the parcel out of his fingers, grasped him firmly by the wrist, gave him a sudden jerk forward, and before he could say Jack Robinson, the other ring of the handcuffs was slipped on to him, and there he was in as nice a little trap as ever I saw.' He proved to be a man who came on duty early to assist in loading up the fish and other market goods. He had generally taken the parcels while the watchman was absent for a few minutes to open the offices, hiding them for a time under a heap of empty boxes, till an opportunity offered itself for removing them to the hole under the stage. In the hole more than a dozen parcels were found. The contents of others he had either pawned or sold.

The next case was one of an entirely different kind, and the parties implicated in it were never discovered. At a certain north-country terminus there was delivered one evening a bale of valuable cloth addressed and consigned (say) to Mr Smith of A—. It was checked from the van on to the platform, and there left to be loaded up an hour or two later on. By-and-by, when the truck for B— came to be loaded up, a bale of cloth was found addressed to a Mr Jones of that town, which bale was accordingly put into the wagon and sent off. When the invoices for A— came to be made out, the bale of cloth for Mr Smith was entered on one of them, on the supposition that it had been duly forwarded, although in reality such was not the case.

About half-past nine next morning, a small pony-cart containing two men drove up to B— Station. One of the men alighted, and asked

whether a bale of cloth addressed to Mr Jones had come to hand. The reply was that they certainly had received such a bale, but without any entry for it on their invoices. The reply of the man was that he, as being Mr Jones the consignee, was quite prepared to pay the carriage if they would only weigh the bale and charge it out at the proper rate. This being feasible enough, Mr Jones's request was at once complied with. The bale was weighed, a bill made out, and the charges duly paid. Then the bale was hoisted into the pony-cart; Mr Jones signed his name in the Company's books as having received it, and the two men drove off with their booty.

When A— telegraphed for the missing bale, and the facts came to be ascertained, there was a considerable rumpus among the officials at the sending station. The case was evidently one of ingenious collusion. It did not matter so greatly who the sham Mr Jones might be. The question was, which of the Company's men at the sending station had removed the original address of the bale and substituted a false one in its place? As it happened, a few weeks previously the Company had engaged a number of new hands, whose testimonials and antecedents they had not yet had time to investigate. About a week later two or three of these strange hands failed to turn up to their work; and all further investigations by the railway officials failing to bring the culprit to light, the loss had to be settled by the payment of something like sixty pounds.

The following story, which is of quite recent date, we extract from *The Railway Sheet and Official Gazette*, an excellent little paper published once a month, and brimful of information on matters of interest to the railway service generally. In the case here given, it would appear that the thieves were totally unconnected with any of the officials of the Company.

'A novel illustration of the ingenuity of thieves has just been afforded by an incident reported from the continent. For some time past a North-German railway Company had been suffering from the repeated loss of goods which were sent by luggage-train, and which, notwithstanding all researches and precautions, continued to disappear in a very mysterious manner. The secret which the inquiries set on foot had failed to discover was at length revealed by a rather amusing accident. A long box, on one side of which were words equivalent to "This side up," had, in disregard of this caution, been set up on end in the goods-shed. Some time afterwards the employes were not a little startled to hear a voice apparently proceeding from the box in question, begging the hearers to let the speaker out. On opening the lid the railway officials were surprised and amused to find a man inside standing on his head. In the explanation which followed, the fellow wanted to account for his appearance under such unusual circumstances as due to the result of a wager; but he was given into custody, and it was soon found that the thieves had adopted this method of conveying themselves on to the railway premises, and that during the absence of the employes they had let themselves out of the box, which they at once filled with any articles they could lay their hands on, refastened the lid, and then decamped, leaving the box to be sent forward to its destination in accordance with the address upon it. But

for the unfortunate inability of poor human nature to endure an inverted position for an indefinite period, the ingenious authors of the scheme might have flourished a long time without detection.'

THE BRAVE SWISS BOY.

A TALE FOR THE YOUNG (CONTINUED).

CHAPTER VI.—A GLIMPSE OF PARISIAN LIFE.

THE bright rays of the morning sun filled the room when Walter awoke from his long and refreshing sleep, to gaze in astonishment at the rich and beautiful furniture that adorned the apartment. Silk curtains, mirrors that reached to the ceiling, beautiful carpets, attractive pictures in gilt frames—all was new and dazzling to the unsophisticated mountain youth. He was still gazing in wonder at all these glories, when Mr Seymour, who had slept in the next room, suddenly opened the door.

'Jump up, Walter,' said he. 'Breakfast is ready, and my friend wants to speak to you; so be as quick as you can.'

'I shall be ready in a few minutes sir,' he replied, as springing out of bed, he washed and dressed himself, and respectfully greeted the two gentlemen, who sat enjoying their coffee in an adjoining room.

At Mr Seymour's invitation, Walter helped himself to breakfast; and when he had finished his meal, looked up inquiringly at the stranger.

'Well then, Walter,' said he in a kindly tone, 'tell me in the first place what you intend to do, now that you have got your money back?'

'Oh, that is very easily answered sir,' replied Walter. 'I shall buckle the belt round my waist again, and return home to-day.'

'I thought that was your intention, Watty,' said Mr Seymour; 'but it would be much safer and far easier to send the money through the post. You will then have no further risk of being robbed, and Mr Frieshardt will be sure to get it in a day or two. As regards yourself'—

Mr Seymour hesitated; and his friend took up the conversation. 'Yes, Walter—you must stay here for the present,' said he, 'and not dream of leaving me—at least for a long time.'

Walter was taken aback. What could the stranger mean? Unable to comprehend the motive of such a remark, he looked in confusion first at one, then at the other, and was greeted only with a hearty laugh.

'I am very much obliged to you for suggesting how I should send the money home,' said the lad; 'and it was certainly very strange that Mr Frieshardt did not think of that, for it would have saved all this trouble with Seppl. But what sir am I to do here? What is there to prevent my returning home?'

'A proposal that my friend Mr Lafond has to make to you,' replied Mr Seymour. 'My friend is in want of an active and trustworthy servant, and thinks that you would suit him well. I think you should take the situation, Walter, for you

will be looked upon rather as a confidential attendant than as a servant; and you will be well paid into the bargain. In a few years you will have earned money enough to provide comfortably for your father in his old age.'

The last words decided Walter. If he could only relieve his father's declining years from care and anxiety, he was content to give up his home for a time, and therefore agreed to accept the proposal. The contract was soon arranged, and Walter entered upon his new duties the same day. He wrote a long letter to his father, explaining the reason of his remaining in Paris, and comforting him with the assurance that when he returned home he would bring plenty of money with him. By the same post he sent a bank-draft to Farmer Frieshardt equivalent to the value of the cattle-money; and a few days after removed into Mr Lafond's splendidly furnished mansion. Mr Seymour did not accompany his friend, having to leave Paris to continue his travels.

'Keep up your heart, my good fellow,' said he, shaking hands with his honest young friend. 'We shall see each other again next year, I hope; and I also trust that you will have a good account to give me of your new home.' With these words Mr Seymour sprang into his travelling-carriage; the postillion cracked his whip, and tears sprang to Walter's eyes as the sound of the wheels died away in the distance.

Thus Walter, who had suddenly risen from the position of a poor drover to that of the principal servant and favourite of a rich young Parisian, found no reason to regret the change that he had made. Mr Lafond treated him in the kindest and most friendly way, so that he soon became thoroughly attached to him. But in the course of a few weeks he observed certain traits in the character of his new employer that occasioned him both sorrow and anxiety, and almost made him regret that he had not returned to his quiet but innocent home. Although a kind-hearted man, Mr Lafond was weak-minded and changeable; and like many other wealthy young men without any occupation, he was addicted to pleasure and dissipation, and spent whole nights at the gaming-table, to the ruin of both his health and morals. As he was of a delicate constitution, these excesses soon produced a very marked effect upon him, and did much to shatter his health. Had Walter been an indifferent or ordinary servant, the ruinous dissipation in which his master indulged would have given him little concern; but as he was sincerely attached to him, he could not avoid expostulating sometimes upon the reckless course of life which he led.

Early one morning Mr Lafond came home after a night of gambling, looking paler and more exhausted than usual. Walter, who had been sitting up for him, was terribly alarmed at the appearance which he presented. 'O my dear sir,' said he with a deep sigh, as he gave him his hand out of the carriage, 'how grieved I am for you!'

Mr Lafond stared at Walter with his glassy eyes, and tried to speak, but could only utter a few disconnected words that were quite incomprehensible. Besides this, he was so unsteady on his feet, that he was obliged to lean on Walter, to prevent himself from falling. The faithful servant

was terribly shocked to find his master so intoxicated as to be almost deprived of his senses, and lost no time in getting him to his room, that his distressing and disgraceful condition might not become known to the rest of the household. After undressing him, which cost a great deal of trouble, Walter got his master to bed, and then sat down and became lost in thought.

It was not until late in the day that Mr Lafond woke from his troubled sleep, and was surprised to find Walter sitting by his bedside. 'Poor fellow!' he said in a good-natured tone, 'I'm afraid I kept you waiting long for me last night. You are a faithful servant, and shall have your wages raised immediately.'

'I am very much obliged to you sir,' said he; 'but I cannot take more of your money. I have only waited here to request my discharge from your service.'

Mr Lafond stared at the young man with surprise. 'What!' he exclaimed, 'you want to leave me! What has put that in your head? Has any one here done anything to make you uncomfortable?'

'No sir, no one,' was the quiet but firm reply. 'I have met with nothing but kindness since I have been in your house, and you have been more than generous to me; but I can't bear to stay here and see you digging your own grave. It breaks my heart sir; and I would rather wander barefoot back to my own mountains than witness it longer.'

'Why, Walter, I'm afraid you're turning crazy,' exclaimed his master; angrily. 'Don't let me hear any more of this nonsense! What can it matter to you whether I die soon or not? At anyrate you must stay with me, and give up such foolish notions.'

Walter shook his head. 'No, sir; I must go,' he replied. 'I can be of no use here. It makes me quite miserable to see how you waste your money in the gaming-houses, and ruin your health by over-indulgence in wine. If my caring for you were not sincere, it would be a matter of no consequence to me whether you went to destruction or not; but'—he added, while tears started to his eyes—'I trust sir, you will pardon me for saying that I cannot look on carelessly while you are ruining yourself; and so I hope you will let me go.'

The reckless gamester was quite moved at the devotion and faithfulness of his servant. Springing from bed, he wrapped himself in his dressing-gown, and walked hastily to and fro in the apartment for a few minutes in silence. At last he paused before Walter and grasped his hand. 'You are a straightforward, warm-hearted fellow,' he exclaimed. 'But the more I am convinced of that, the less disposed am I to part with you. Will you not stay with me?'

'No, my good master; I cannot,' answered Walter firmly.

'Not even if I promise to turn over a new leaf, and neither to drink nor gamble any more from this day?'

Walter was in a measure reassured by these words, and his eyes were lit up with a new hope. 'Ah! if you really will do that, sir!' he exclaimed. 'That alters everything; and I shall be as overjoyed to stay with you as I should have been sorry to leave you.'

'Then, that is settled,' said his master in a serious tone. 'I am obliged to you for speaking so faithfully to me. I know that I have been living in a foolish way; but I will be different for the future. That you may rely upon.'

Walter's joy was so great at hearing this unexpected resolution that he nearly burst into tears. Unhappily, however, he was soon to experience the disappointment of all his hopes.

For a fortnight Mr Lafond kept his promise faithfully; but at the end of that time he again yielded to the old temptation, and after a night of revelry, returned home in broad daylight in a state of complete helplessness. The servant renewed his entreaties and warnings; reminded his master that the physician had declared that his existence depended on his leading a sober life; and obtained from him a renewal of the broken promise. But alas! it proved as vain as before. In a few days all his hopes were again crushed, and his prayers and entreaties were only answered by his master with a shrug of the shoulders.

'You know nothing about it, Walter,' said he. 'The temptation is so strong, that one can't be always resisting it.'

'But it is your duty to resist it sir; and you can succeed if you will only make up your mind to do so.'

'It's too late now,' replied the other with a faint smile. 'I have fought and fought, and been beaten at last. I shall give up fighting now.'

'Are you really in earnest?' inquired Walter seriously.

'I am really in earnest,' replied Mr Lafond.

'Then I must indeed quit your service sir. I will not stay here if I cannot save you from rushing headlong to destruction.'

'Silly fellow!' replied his master testily. 'What more would you have? It will be for your direct advantage to stay with me. Look at my condition. The doctor was quite right in saying that I couldn't live another year. Remain here for that short time, and you shall be well paid for your services. I will take care too not to forget you in my will.'

The young Switzer could not restrain his emotion at hearing his weak-minded but good-natured master talk in such a careless way about death. Unable to speak, he turned to leave the room, when Mr Lafond called him back.

'Have you no reply to make to me?' he demanded in an offended tone.

'Nothing more than this sir—that your doctor assured me you might live for ten, twenty, or even thirty years longer, if you could only be persuaded to live in a sober and reasonable way. O my dear sir,' he exclaimed, 'do give up these habits, that are ruining body and soul, and I will devote my whole life to you!'

'No use!' was the gloomy reply. 'If I were to make new resolutions, they would only be broken, as the others have been. The doctor is quite mistaken in his opinion. I suppose I must fulfil my destiny. So let the matter drop, Walter.'

'Anything can be done if one is only determined,' persisted the young man, with entreaty in his tone.

His master turned away and shook his head. 'Too late, too late! I haven't the moral courage or determination.'

'Then may God have mercy upon you!' replied

the servant solemnly; 'this is no longer a place for me.'

Swayed on the one hand by a sense of duty to himself, and on the other, by pity for his terribly misled master, Walter sorrowfully quitted the apartment; and after packing a few things, returned to take his final leave. Mr Lafond, however, would not bring himself to believe in the reality of such a sudden and determined resolution, and used every argument to induce the lad to change his mind. He even begged him as a personal favour to remain; but Walter persisted in his determination; nor could the most lavish offers of emolument induce him to stay and be a helpless spectator of the ruin of one whom he was unable to save.

'If I were only as determined as you are,' sighed Mr Lafond, 'how much better it would be for me! But now it is too late! Farewell then, Walter, if you have made up your mind to quit my service. But though you leave me, it is not necessary that you return to your mountain-home. I received this letter from my uncle, General De Bougy, who lives in Rouen. The old gentleman is in want of a steady and trustworthy servant, and asks me to send him one; so I think the best thing you can do will be to go there for a twelvemonth. You will find him a better master than I have been; and if you are really determined to leave me, you might do worse than enter his service. I feel sure you will be comfortable.'

Walter shook his head. 'I shouldn't like to go into another house sir, after the experience I have had in your service.'

'But you will be serving me, Walter, if you go and assist my uncle in his old age. Recollect, I only ask you to go for a year. It is the last request I have to make. Surely you won't refuse?'

'Well sir, I will go for a year, since you urge it so strongly,' assented Walter, who could no longer resist his master's appeal. 'When shall I start?'

'When you please. You will be welcome there at any time.'

'Then I will set out at once, sir; the sooner our parting is over, the better.'

'But if it is so painful to you, why go away at all? You know how glad I should be for you to stay.'

'And you know sir, why I am obliged to go,' replied Walter firmly. 'Pardon me, dear sir, for speaking any more on the subject; but if you only had had the resolution to—'

'I'll make another trial, Walter,' said Mr Lafond with a smile that contrasted strongly with his sunken and wasted features. 'You shall hear from me in three months,' he continued; 'and perhaps— Well, we shall see. Good-bye, and my best wishes go with you!'

Walter grasped the hand which his master extended, and kissed it fervently. 'God bless and preserve you!' said he with tears in his eyes. 'If prayers, earnest prayers for you can be of any help, you will be saved!'

'Farewell, Walter. You have been a faithful servant,' exclaimed Mr Lafond, with painful emotion. 'God be with you—perhaps we shall never meet each other again!'

So they parted. Walter went by the first conveyance to Rouen to the house of General De Bougy; and his former master sunk into profound

grief as he dwelt upon the affection and solicitude which the young Switzer had shewn towards him. 'Only a year sooner,' he mused with torturing anguish, 'and I might have been a saved man! Now, alas! thou hast come too late, noble and generous heart!'

LIFE ON A CALIFORNIA RANCH.

It became the fortune of the writer to leave San Francisco in September 1878, and after crossing Santa Clara Valley—one of the richest in the state—to ascend by a fine stage-road into the very heart of a spur of the Santa Cruz Mountains. This road begins at a little village at the foot of the hills, and creeps gradually higher and higher, turning this bluff and that spur, until after a league, the traveller looks down into the glowing valley, and if timid, shudders in secret at the depth.

The path thus leading away from the inhabited valley, full of men and towns, into the quiet seclusion of the land among the hills, finally comes to a fair broad region, where the 'ranchmen' plant their acres with vines and fruit-trees, and where a stranger may live without ever wishing for the world of commerce, or thinking of it. There are high hills upon every side except towards the west. In that direction the land sinks in alternate ridges and ravines toward the ocean, and the great redwoods line the horizon. The houses are made of inch redwood boards and building-paper, and are accordingly somewhat rude structures, but they sufficiently answer the purpose in this agreeable climate.

There is no stone fit for walls, like those with which the New England farmers separate their fields, and so the inhabitants split the trunks of the redwood pines into rough pickets three inches square and five feet long; and after driving them into the soil in lines, bind them close together at the top with strips of board. The fence thus constructed is cheap, quickly made, effective, and durable. There is little concern for appearances; the soil of many years remains undisturbed upon the wagon-wheels; no flower-garden is well cared for; they mend the harnesses with bits of ropes; and they trust little or nothing to the vanity of paint. You see no vegetable gardens, no patches of potatoes, lettuce, peas; no little areas carefully fenced and carefully cultivated in odd moments, when greens are in season. It does not pay to be at the trouble, and for this reason—the warmth of the soil and the early heat of the sun tend to force the vegetables into premature ripeness, and thence into coarseness of fibre.

The grapes that grow in this favoured place are wonderfully large and fine. They are much better than those of the valleys, and are eagerly sought for by those who use the better kinds. A neighbour to me grew sixty varieties last season, though it is probable that not more than twenty kinds went to market. Every one's vines are prosperous, and the yield is enormous. The plants grow lying upon the ground; the dryness of the summer preventing the rot which attacks them in regions where rains are more frequent. It is quite a common thing to go out in the cool of a delicious morning and cut off bunches of these grapes, and devour them three or four at a time,

gazing meanwhile at acres more of the same kind. A certain ferocity develops, in the reveller after a few weeks' indulgence in this sort of repast. One would lose the respect of all his friends were he to write down faithfully what his capacity for grapes at length becomes. In number, in weight, in kinds, the result is alike prodigious.

The ranchmen make boxes out of the clear redwood, and pack twenty-five pounds of grapes in each—all honestly picked, and decorated with the leaves of the vines. These are carried in wagon-loads to the valley below or to Santa Cruz on the coast. Now and then you perceive a most delicious odour in the roadway, and after a while it is seen that the dust has received a slight sprinkling. You walk on, half intoxicated, charmed by the soft air, the scenery, and the shade of the overhanging trees, and you overtake a wagon laden with grapes *en masse*—a purple sight, rich and tempting. They are on the way to some wine-press. Nearly every ranchman fills a few casks yearly with the juice of some of his grapes, thinking that he is laying up a claret which will be fine some day. But he has his labour for his uneducated pains, and produces only an acrid liquor the reverse of palatable.

The Californian ranchmen have wonderful aptitude for driving, and one sees some pretty good examples among these hills. The road down the mountain-sides is entirely unguarded upon the outer edge, and the descent in most places is precipitous. A balky horse, or a fractured wheel, or a slight carelessness in handling the reins, might easily send a carriage-load of people to destruction—and an awful destruction too. The path is wide enough for one pair of wheels only, but at intervals in favourable places it broadens so that teams may pass each other. To drive in such a manner as not to meet another traveller midway between these places is a special branch of the art. The huge lumber-teams which carry wood from the mills in the mountains to the yards in the valleys, being unwieldy and very heavy, are especially hard to manage. Yet the drivers always seem easy and nonchalant. First there is a large four-wheeled oaken truck, with a seat in front ten feet above the ground; behind it is another truck, something shorter, but still enormously stout. These are fastened together, and loaded with from ten to fifteen tons of freshly sawn lumber—boards and joists. This mass is drawn by six or eight mules or horses, guided by reins and a prodigiously long whip. The first wagon has a powerful brake, worked by a long iron lever by the driver upon his seat. The driver is a man of nerve and courage. His skill must be of the highest order. It will not do for him to take fright even if in imminent danger, and he must know almost to a hair's-breadth where he can go and where he cannot. Towering up far above the road, overlooking the most stupendous depths, and guiding with a few slender lines a tremendous force, he must needs be an adept and a tireless one. But a beholder, ignorant of the danger that constantly surrounds him, would say his work was simple, and that he managed matters with ease. True, he seems so. With his broad-brimmed hat shading his sun-burned face, his sinewy hands holding the reins with carelessness, his legs out-

stretched, with one foot feeling the all-important brake, he jogs onward with his monster charge without trouble or concern; the bells upon the horses' breasts jingle a little tune; the great wheels crush the stones in the path; the load creaks like a ship's hull in a sudden gust; wild birds sweep down into the hazy, sunny depths below—yet the driver seems to take no heed. But let a 'scare' take place; let a herd of runaway cattle appear at a bend and set the horses wild, and then see what will happen. The day-dreamer will become a giant of strength. He is up in a flash; he shortens his hold upon the reins, and feeling his wagon start up beneath him, places a foot of iron on the brake. The horses snort and rear and surge; the harnesses rattle, the dust arises, the load shrieks again, and the huge wheels turn fatally faster and faster. An instant may hurl the wagon down into the valley with its struggling train—a mad rush to the other side of the way may end all in one horrible plunge. Muscle, eye, brain, skill are then brought to work so splendidly together, that the peril is averted, and the looker-on, who knows not the ways of the land, regards the teamster with profound respect thereafter.

The horses that are used in the country are mostly of the mustang sort. A mustang is a creature which has indeed the form of a horse, together with certain characteristics of his own—namely, a bad memory, which permits him to shy at a harmless shrub twenty times a day, if he sees it as often; ingratitude, which permits him to kick and injure his best human friend; absence of mind, which permits him to run furiously after it has been made clear to him that he is expected to walk; and a power to develop energy with great rapidity, which enables him to change in a twinkling from a simple trustworthy looking nag into a snorting, biting, kicking demon. With these vices, he has the one virtue of being enduring as so much brass.

There is a peculiar dress worn by the out-of-door folk of this land among the hills that deserves to be introduced into other lands, so fit is it for the wear and tear of farming. It consists of pantaloons or overalls, and jacket, made of canvas, coloured brown, and fastened in all important places with small copper rivets. It wears astonishingly well. The hunters wear a 'jumper' of the same material, filled with pockets inside and out for their innumerable wants, while the lower part forms a game-bag of considerable size.

Trees of various kinds, such as oak, cherry, &c., form an agreeable variety, where so much 'redwood' predominates. The redwoods have become famous for their size and height all the world over, the *Wellingtonia gigantea* of Calaveras belonging to the family. They usually grow in fraternal groups of three or four, and it is impossible not to feel impressed by their solemnity when walking among them. The ground at their feet is covered with their browned spines, and their trunks rise one hundred and fifty feet before putting forth a branch. Many are ten feet in diameter at ten feet above the ground, and a few are so large that speculators hew and burn cavities in the bases when the road runs conveniently near, and therein set up a kind of restaurant for the benefit of the thirsty traveller!

The writer had hoped to leave at least the dust behind, and derive from the tall trees and the cooling streams a little of the summer comfort which had been so signally denied him in the region below. Disappointment, however, was his lot. On reaching the hills he found the brooks dry, and their courses marked with boulders, upon whose nether sides one could light a match. The depths of the woods were airless ovens, where in a moment the hands and face ran with perspiration. There was not a blade of grass to be seen. The earth was brown, powdery, and hot. The dust in the roads was astonishing for its depth. It arose in obedience to the slightest breath, and after a little acquaintance with the sunburnt region, one foretold that a friend was coming by seeing a moving cloud over the top of the hill. For twenty yards on each side of the highways and lanes the underbrush was whitened. When people went to ride, they pulled linen coats over their better garments, and tied their wrists and collars. For the first mile or two the traveller snorts the dust out of his nostrils, and at intervals surveys his powdered clothing with dismay. Through his blurred eyes he barely sees the features of his neighbour upon the same seat; the horses are entirely beyond his view; a sense of suffocation overcomes him; and all sounds are drowned as they are in a snow-storm. At length, however, instead of being annoyed at the quantity of dirt which settles upon him, he refrains from shaking himself, and with a certain amused interest, wonders how high the pile upon the back of his glove will grow before the journey comes to an end. The dust is a feature of the land, and strangers who have heard of it, regard it with curiosity, as they do their first gold mine.

This persistent recurrence of dry days, the everlasting pouring down of yellow light upon the parched yellowish landscape, the breathing of hot air from all quarters, the absence of flourishing crops and greenery from the fields, soon dry up the soul of the new-comer, and weary out his patience.

At the close of October the skies were yet clear, the atmosphere a little hazy, the mornings and evenings enjoyably warm, and the nights refreshingly cool. The fruit of the orchards had been marketed long since, and the grapes were two-thirds gathered. The affairs of the year were winding up; two or three weeks in November would give the farmers ample time to clear away their tardy crop, and then the winter might fall, and welcome. One bright day succeeded another; the 'verdello' ripened, yielding sweet, pale-green grapes; and piles of newly made redwood boxes stood in every yard ready for their luscious burden. At length there came a moment when further effort became useless; when the summer, with its fruits and its glories of colour, went out, and winter, like a 'spook' in a pantomime, came suddenly in.

In California, the two seasons end and begin respectively with the same event—a shower of rain. Autumn does not intervene; there is no fall of the leaf, no augmentation of the winds. Last year the summer ran on until the 1st of November. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon a few drops fell. After that the people spoke of the winter as having arrived. Everything seemed taken by surprise; the rain had come; the horses

gazed strangely about them ; the children ran out with wild noises, and stood bareheaded and laughing in the thick of the storm ; the men leaned in the doorways with their hands in their pockets, silently pleased ; the dust turned slowly into mire ; the leaves of the madrones, the cherry-trees, and the oaks lifted themselves up and glistened in the pale light, and rills began to murmur everywhere. The yearly adjustment had begun ; the other side of the balance had started downward, and the land rejoiced. Everything was changed out of its old course. The choppers, with their axes upon their shoulders, came out of the deep recesses of the woods, the mills put out their fires, and the grape-gatherers came down from the vineyards. The teams ceased to traverse the roads, stages were exchanged for wagons, and letters and papers came but rarely. A sense of being thrust out of the world, a notion of common ill-fortune, made good neighbours of the people in the foot-hills, and a lively interchange of visits between ranch and ranch soon followed the beginning of the rains.

Rain followed rain in quick succession, always coming from the Pacific, and nearly always attended with a degree of cold that made it uncomfortable to stop in the open air even if thickly clad. The ranch upon which the writer lived was some eighteen miles from the nearest salt-water ; yet even as far inland as this, there were none of those calm gently dropping showers that fall in England—those soft rains that gather the odours of the gardens, and instil the senses with so much that is grateful. Here the rain always came on the wings of a tempest, and poured down furiously. But given a pleasant day in the midst of this Californian winter, and the discomfort of the rain and its attendant gloom vanishes, and the dweller in these parts goes forth charmed. The very early morning of one of these incomparable days is truly a wonder of softness and gentleness. The geniality of those few early hours is inexpressibly soothing ; one is not exhilarated, but quieted ; not wrought up to saddle his horse and ride a race, but impelled rather to sit in some sunlit spot and watch the world awaken in tranquillity. By the latter part of November the farmers are out with their ploughs, and the toil of the sower begins. The fields grow dark with the subsoil, and then change, and grow verdant with the grain. Rye-grass springs up on the brown hill-sides that have been dry all summer, and the streams in the deep wooded gulches make a low roar that never ceases. The flowers gather themselves up and shew their faces, and the almond-trees put out their clouds of fragrant blossoms. On the oaks, whose branches are hung with mistletoe, a gray-green moss gathers and sways to and fro above the head. Numberless blue-birds dash across the fields, and now and then a meadow-lark lifts up its clear sweet voice, and turns December into August. Quail, rabbit, and deer are abroad, and in the night-time the coyotes howl and bark in the forest.

The ranchman's one amusement is dancing, which he enthusiastically avails himself of. No matter if the night be stormy—no matter if the host's house be a board-cabin a mile from a road, and deep down in a gloomy ravine where the sun and moon rarely penetrate—the ranchman is bound by all the instincts of his nature to be on the spot, and to stand up in every

quadrille in which he can find a place. Wood-choppers, farmers, teamsters, miners, squatters, together with a number of wives and daughters, some remarkably pretty, and some remarkably ugly—get together at an hour's notice, and keep up reels and polkas until a very late hour next morning. A single violin is the motive-power. No matter if a cloud of dust arises from the ill-cleansed floor of the woodman's shanty—no matter if few appear upon the scene who have not danced together hundreds of times—the fun abates not ; and at the breaking up there is no one who will not promise to be on hand 'to-morrow night,' in case to-morrow night is to be marked with another similar festivity.

THE COOL ENGLISHMAN.

CHAPTER II.

ONCE more Simon laid himself down for the enjoyment of his often-disturbed repose, and once more he sank into a gentle slumber. And now for the third time he was awakened, but from a cause very different from the other occasions. The scene which ensued was as follows.

When Dan the waiter took his departure from the door of the obstinate guest whom he had been so vainly endeavouring to arouse, the flood must already have been descending upon the valley. For a brief interval, however, Mr Simon Lee was not awakened by the noise of the torrent, partly because it was still at a distance, and partly because the roar which it emitted was deadened by the intervening walls. He was only conscious of a soft, rushing, and not unpleasant murmur. (This murmur could hardly have proceeded from the flood ; but was more probably due to the stream outside, which had become swollen in the night.) If, on a summer forenoon, the reader has ever lain with his back on the grass, and listened to that most delicious of all sounds the sighing of fir-tree tops in the breeze, he will be able to form some conception of our hero's sensations. There lay the blissfully ignorant Simon in bed, with his nightcap perched slightly over one eye, half unconsciously enjoying that sweet and gentle murmur. Presently, as the sound grew louder, he became more fully awake.

'What can that noise be?' thought Simon drowsily. 'Rain? I never heard rain like that before. Wind? It's too loud for wind. And, dear me!' exclaimed Simon, raising himself to a sitting posture in bed, 'what an extraordinary noise! It sounds like some one pouring a can of water outside my door! What curious people the persons in this house must be to pour water about outside the doors of their guests! Is it a regular custom in Ireland, I wonder? But, dear me!' added Simon, for the noise was growing still louder, 'if I don't stop them they will be flooding the whole house. Hillo, there, hillo!' cried Simon, raising his voice. 'You can leave off making that noise, thank you! It's very kind of you to do it, but I have heard quite enough; thanks!'

But the noise instead of leaving off became still louder. 'Extraordinary persons these Irish,' quoth

Simon again, half-angrily and half-sleepily. 'If they have a guest or stranger staying with them for the night, they appear to make it the business of their lives and their greatest delight to endeavour to wake him up at all possible hours in the night. First comes a lumbering waiter and bangs at the door; then some one comes and pours water about, and won't leave off when he's told to. But if they expect me to get up, they're mistaken. And so saying, Simon drew the bed-clothes over him, and laid himself down again to sleep. But scarcely had he done so when a horrid thought struck him. 'Is it possible,' was the sickening thought, 'that the house can be on fire? Can the noise proceed from the fire-engine playing water on to the top of the house? Mercy preserve us!' And with these words in his mouth he leaped out of bed, and with his nightcap still on his head, scarce stopping to put on his clothes, rushed downstairs. The house was entirely deserted. All the doors stood open. Numerous articles lay strewn upon the floor, which their possessors had left behind, being probably too heavy-laden or too frightened to carry them.

The hero of this memoir was horror-struck as he viewed this strange spectacle. He called, but no one answered; screamed, and finally, in a frenzy of terror and apprehension, rushed to the outside door, and was on the point of escaping through it, when he was driven back by the same noise he had heard before, hitherto deadened by the intervening walls, but now swollen to a roar. It was indeed the harbinger of the flood, which in a few moments was to burst on the devoted dwelling. A sudden instinctive feeling of the nature of the danger which now beset him, for the first time penetrated into Simon's mind. With hasty and trembling steps he scrambled up the staircase and tottered into his chamber. He was just in time. A sound like thunder literally shook the house as the flood approached. The windows rattled as with the anticipation of the coming devastation. Sick with terror and gasping for breath, Simon, who had put his head out of the window, drew it in again as quickly as he could when he saw the mighty torrent bearing down—so it seemed—on the inn itself. There was a roar, a shock like an earthquake as the flood came on; and the water tossing and foaming, rose half-way up to the window of the chamber; while within the house it could be heard splashing and dashing in wild tumult. The cheek of the terrified prisoner was blanched with an agony of fear and apprehension, as he stood clinging to the bed, scarce knowing where he was, and momentarily expecting to be whirled away by the torrent. But the house being, as we have said, of solid construction, withstood the shock. For the time then it was safe. But the sight which met Simon's gaze as he stood, staring with all the intensity of terror, was a sight indeed to be remembered. The turbid water rushed along like a mad thing, foaming, dashing, and sweeping everything before it. Huge trees torn up by the roots were whirled along in its gigantic eddies, rising and sinking in the waves. The flood literally leaped and bounded in the air, as though rejoicing in the havoc it was working. It seemed like some huge demon let loose from the chains in which it had been pent, to wreak vengeance on every object within its reach.

Its surface was fretted with waves, which with their curling crests and leaping forms, resembled—so it seemed to Simon's excited imagination—a pack of fierce wolves hounding the terrified occupants of a sledge of which they have caught scent, and thirsting and yelling for their prey!

The raging torrent bore on. Simon spell-bound, viewed it tearing down the valley at headlong speed. At a short distance from the inn stood a mill. The flood met it; but the crash which ensued was lost in the roar of the water. The mill sank down into the fatal embrace of the boiling waves, and was immediately whirled away. Farther down stood a good-sized bridge, solidly built; and in the twinkling of an eye, so silently, so noiselessly that Simon could scarcely believe his senses, the bridge, strong as it was, was swept away!

How the fine genius of Coleridge would have revelled in the sight! It was precisely the spectacle which a pen such as his would have magnificently embodied in verse. There is a well-known poem by him entitled *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter*, wherein he has powerfully described a scene somewhat similar. 'Fire' is there personified and represented as a gigantic fury of colossal stature, who is recounting her recent exploits to her colleagues 'Famine' and 'Slaughter':

'Sisters, I from Ireland come;
Hedge and corn-field all on flame.
I triumphed o'er the setting sun;
And all the while the work was done,
On as I strode with my huge strides,
I flung back my head and I held my sides.
It was so rare a piece of fun
To see the sweltered cattle run,
Scared by the red and noisy light,
With uncouth gallop through the night.'

Fine as this passage is, we think that Coleridge, had he been in Simon Lee's place, might have found a still nobler demon in 'Water,' for nothing could have been more sublime than the mighty torrent we have attempted to describe, dancing and tearing onward down the glen and through the valley, and tossing huge trees like playthings in its gigantic arms. The water, here and there whitened by huge flakes of foam, bore on its surface not only trees, but vast fragments of turf, covered with brushwood and weeds. These floated swiftly along, sometimes sinking in the waves of the torrent, and sometimes rising suddenly from the depths of the water. The whole scene was so strange and fantastic, that Simon could scarcely believe that he was not the victim of some hideous delusion or of some unhealthy dream.

Several hours passed away in this manner, Simon, anxious and terrified, momentarily expecting to be swept away, or buried in the ruins of the inn, when it should succumb to the force of the flood. To him every minute seemed an hour, every hour a day. The water he could hear dashing against the steps of the staircase. Worse than all, it seemed to be ascending higher and higher every moment. Each splash which it made against the walls or wooden steps fell on Simon's ear like a death-knell. Each minute his terror grew more extreme. His face was so ghastly, that when he happened to catch sight of it in the looking-glass of the chamber, it startled even himself. As he listened, he could hear the splashing in the

interior of the dwelling growing louder. It wanted only this to work up Simon's apprehension to a point beyond endurance, for at this stage of the proceedings our hero sank into happy unconsciousness.

How long Simon remained in this trance is uncertain. When, however, he awoke it was about eight o'clock in the morning, and the gray light of dawn, by means of which he had witnessed the flood and its ravages, was exchanged for the rays of the morning sun, which streaming through the latticed window, gradually aroused him from his swoon. Our hero lifted his head drowsily, and dazed and stupefied, succeeded at length in exchanging a vertical for a horizontal posture. At first he hardly realised where he was, or the circumstances under which he was placed; but when the adventures of the night came back to his remembrance, it flashed across Simon that he must have been completely and wonderfully preserved from the danger which had threatened him. For though a considerable space of time had passed since he had first resigned himself to unconsciousness, the house had remained firm on its foundations,* nor had the water risen sufficiently high in the interior of the dwelling to endanger the life of its solitary inmate. Simon therefore was safe. And yet, great as was the relief which this discovery afforded him, we cannot say that he displayed any very strong manifestations of exuberant delight when the reassuring fact dawned upon him. He took it all very quietly and composedly—we had almost said philosophically, which is, at any rate, at variance with the assertions of some people who still are possessed of the idea that he then and there flung his cotton nightcap to the ceiling, and performed a sort of hornpipe dance on the floor. But even if we could put aside or forget the indecorum of such a proceeding, and reconcile it with the circumstances of the case, it is so completely at variance with the customary soberness and gravity of that gentleman's demeanour, that we lean to the philosophical side of the argument.

Meanwhile the landlord and the landlady and the other denizens of the inn were anxiously waiting on the hill-side for the flood to subside. The air was raw, and so piercingly cold indeed, that it almost literally froze their blood. To secure themselves from its deadly influence, they wrapped themselves in blankets and sheets, which they had carried with them in their flight, and kept perpetually moving to and fro, resembling in fact so many spectres in grave-clothes engaged in their nightly revels. They had had timely warning of the approach of the flood, and from their elevated position had seen it encircle the inn to a considerable depth. It was no wonder therefore that they thought with sinking hearts of its effects on their little home. The hostess wrung her hands in agony, as the picture arose on her mind of fractured glass and crockery, and the bedraggled linen which had once been the pride of her heart. The landlord groaned as he thought of the cows and the pigs which had been purchased at the market only the day before.

'The purtiest critturs that ever was seen,' said he sorrowfully; 'and the English gentleman too,

so dacent and fair-spoken! Bad luck to it! the pigs an' them lovely cows!'

'Pigs! cows! ye fool!' interjected his help-mate gruffly; 'what's them to my new sheets and iligant furnishings? We'll never see the like o' them again!'

While this little colloquy was going on, Dan, who had so vainly endeavoured to arouse Mr Simon Lee from his slumbers, approached the worthy pair.

'What's come over the English gentleman, Dan? Why didn't ye bring him down with ye, me boy?' said the landlord, who now for the first time had composure enough to put the question.

'Sure how could I?' replied Dan; 'sorra a bit of him would git up.'

'Did ye tell him that the flood was coomin'?'

'Sure I did.'

'And what did he say?'

'Why, says he, as cool and unconcerned as Biddy McGuire's cow, "I bein't agoin' by it." Who knows, but he's many a mile down the wathers by this time, poor gentleman. Ah! he was a cool one!'

In this last sentiment the landlord and his belated companions were not long in acquiescing; for in a short time Dan had quite a crowd of listeners round him, composed of the inhabitants of the village, who now heard with sorrowful interest the story of the 'cool Englishman' who would not get up from his bed even to avoid destruction!

So the hours of that eventful morning wore away. At about six o'clock the sun rose wan and red behind the hills, and revealed to them the inn half buried in the water. At seven o'clock the violence of the flood began to slacken; and by eight o'clock the water had sunk so far that the landlord and his family, accompanied by their neighbours, ventured to descend the hill. As they neared the inn, they were able to discern more clearly than they had hitherto done the nature and extent of the loss they had sustained. The water which had penetrated into the inn, had in retreating, carried with it various articles of furniture, linen, &c., leaving in exchange a somewhat less desirable commodity—mud. Alas too for the pigs and cows! The cows had both been drowned in their byre, and now lay half buried in slime and entangled with weeds. Three of the four pigs had been carried away by the flood; one of them, the pride of its master's heart, lay stretched dead on a bank. The inn itself presented a sorry spectacle, the whitewashed walls being muddy and discoloured, and the glass of its windows shattered.

Whilst the family and their friends were bemoaning the hapless fate of the cool Englishman, and devising measures for recovering his remains, a sudden and startling noise was heard proceeding from the interior of the inn. It sounded like some one in large clumsy boots descending a flight of wooden stairs. This noise considerably alarmed the neighbours, who had imagined the house to be entirely unoccupied; nor were the landlord and his family less alarmed, as they speculated upon the ghost of the English gentleman, who they all imagined had been carried away and drowned by the flood. Many of the most timorous shewed a strong disposition to flee, and one of them hazarded

* Its preservation, we are informed, was due to a large bank which partially sheltered it from the water.

in a whisper that it must be the Demon of the mountains, a personage held in great awe by the villagers at that time, and who was represented by local traditions to emerge from his place of concealment—a woody covert in the glen above—in time of floods, and to stalk down with gigantic steps into the valley below. The conjecture thus thrown out as to the cause of the mysterious noise inside the inn was but too readily believed by the other rustics; but Dan valiantly combated the absurd notion. But at that very instant, however, the true author of the disturbance appeared to view. This was, as the reader will have guessed, no other than Mr Simon Lee himself!

If the Demon of the mountain presented half the extraordinary appearance that Simon Lee presented when he issued forth from the inn-door before the astonished eyes of the assembled villagers, that Demon must have been well worthy of his race and of his name; for be it known that our hero came attired in nought but a long blue dressing-gown, a pair of heavy boots, and a white cotton nightcap. And so sudden was this apparition, that the villagers manifested more than ever a strong disposition to take to their heels, and would doubtless have made themselves exceedingly scarce had not the valiant Dan again restrained them.

'The sorra a Demon is there,' he shouted; 'sure, it's the cool English gentleman himself. Look at his dressin'-gown and nightcap. Did ye ever see the Demon wearin' a dressin'-gown loike that before?'

While Dan was thus rallying the fears of the assembled rustics, our hero advanced in a dignified manner, astonished at the sensation which he appeared to have excited. After a moment's consideration, however, he came to the conclusion that it must be all due to the awe and respect which—as he flattered himself—his deportment never failed to inspire. Much gratified by this idea, he infused into his manner even more dignity than was his wont.

Attired in his long blue dressing-gown and huge white nightcap, and situated as he was with regard to those who had given him up as a lost man, Simon may well have awakened terror in the superstitious minds of those ignorant rustics.

Gradually, however, they discovered their mistake, and having learned that it was really the cool Englishman, and no apparition, they mustered up courage enough to approach him.

Superstitious fear, we may remark, is near akin to superstitious reverence—reverence, that is, for people who do not deserve it at all, or only in a small degree. The villagers who had at first been afraid of Simon, now lionised him. The account which Dan had given them of his bravery had so worked upon their imaginations, that they now came to regard him as some great hero, and testified their admiration in a way which was somewhat unpleasant to the object of it. There was literally a rage for him. The rustics shoved and jostled each other in their efforts to obtain a nearer view of the illustrious stranger, at the same time giving vent to their enthusiastic emotions in such exclamations as, 'Three cheers for the hero of the inn,' 'One cheer more for the brave Englishman,' and the like; and as there were more than half a hundred of them, and each rustic was

gifted with stentorian lungs, the clamour may be better imagined than described. To add too, to the confusion of their hero, the rustics crowded round him so closely, that the unfortunate little man suffered not a little physical discomfort. It was therefore with no small difficulty that Simon succeeded in extricating himself from the hands of his troublesome admirers; and having at length done so, ascended a small knoll, and there took up his position; while the natives formed a dense circle below him, their numbers being every moment augmented by fresh stragglers from the village.

A WORD ABOUT TOYS.

THOUGH toys are becoming every year more complete, more expensive, more luxurious, it is a question whether, for all their wealth of playthings, the Ernests and Ediths of to-day have a real advantage over the Jacks and Jills that went before them.

Jack of the good old times had his ship which he himself constructed, and which was always imperfect, and often ungainly. He had his box of tools, and was handy with them; and his soldiers—two dozen in a blue card-board box, with a picture of a battle on the cover—were the greatest heroes that ever trod the earth. They were the delight of his holiday heart, and so was his brass pea-cannon, until on some luckless and very early day he discharged it with too much military ardour, and pulling out the spring, disabled his whole battery of artillery at once. As for Jill, she had her doll, which she loved with a distinct personal affection, and which Jack despised and yet tolerated. She held long conversations with it on the moral responsibilities of a young lady with such a grand dress—made out of a piece of her own old muslin frock: she cut out and sewed its clothes, dressed it, and put it regularly to bed. A lady of advanced age of our acquaintance, noted for taste in dress, traces her accomplishment to the practice of making doll's clothes when a girl. The old-fashioned toy system at least among ladies had therefore its uses.

As for Jack and Jill together, they lived in a realm of fancy as bright, if not as tangibly real as fairyland itself—for fairyland was real, at least to Jill. They were king and queen when they chose, had 'sham' armies and a 'sham' court; killed each other in battle, with brown-paper armour on their gallant breasts. They had a castle on the top landing, with more gorgeous tapestries and furniture—out of the lumber-room—than are to be found at Windsor. They played at 'house' behind the easy-chair, and served princely suppers with delicious dishes of orange-peel and paper. We have known children to go farther than this, and soon forgetting all toys from the shop, amuse themselves endlessly with a quantity of coloured bugle-beads ripped from old mats, and such odds and ends as old squares of paint, neat American clothes-pegs, and draughtsmen. With these poor materials and a foreign

coin they were wonderfully constructive. The beads standing on end served for armies; or they constructed cities, houses, railways and railway companies with full stock, or banks for which they kept accounts, though necessarily of a most primitive nature. The coin was used to decide, by tossing up on a corner of the table, whether the men fell or stood in battle, whether passengers came into the 'paint' railway carriages, or depositors to the bank. The tossing was carried on with the greatest intelligence, and thus chance was made the grand new element in this wonderfully diversified system of play. Happy Jack and Jill! wherever Fate has sent you drifting now far out into the real world, you have carried with you, from your old self-created unreal world, gifts with which no fairy godmother could have dowered you—a power of imagination vivid and inexhaustible, a quick invention, a capability of rising from the poor tangible sources of enjoyment to the rich and invisible ones; and above all the faculty of being easily made happy, which is in itself a purse of Fortunatus such as too few in the hard-worked world are lucky enough to possess.

Now, Ernest and Edith, born some years later, and endowed from their infancy with a silver spoon, have such an abundance of perfect and luxurious toys, that they run the risk of losing not only most of the childish pleasures of fancy, but much of the grand imagination and ready wit which the nature of their toys helped to bestow on Jack and Gill. Look for a proof of this at the dolls destined for dainty Miss Edith, which are to be seen any day in the Burlington Arcade, or which were, last year, shewn in far more imposing array in the Paris Exhibition. Dolls ranging to several guineas in price are common enough in London; but in Paris a greater excess was reached. In the Exhibition were to be seen dolls dressed in the most unchildish manner in the highest fashion, placed in a sort of tableau arrangement, every part of which was minutely perfect. For instance, there was a drawing-room in which the mimic upholstery was of the richest description; the waxen ladies were supposed to drink tea from a miniature set of real china; the clock upon the mantel-piece had a tiny mechanism that made it go; and the pianoforte, small as it appeared, proved to be no dumb show when its keys were touched. We cannot suppose that even the most wealthy are in the habit of giving to their children such wonderful effects of mechanism as this; but articles of lesser degrees of luxury, perfect and marvellous, are often enough played with and thrown away by children whose parents can afford a few extra guineas for their amusement.

The dolls' clothes are no longer made by the deft fingers of little girls; they are the work of milliners and doll-makers, who save the purchasers all wholesome trouble in the future; and the sizes of Parisian dolls being numbered, and their shoes, clothes, and hats numbered to correspond in the shops, the little girl who requires a new doll's mantle or pair of shoes has only to go to the toy-shop and state the number of her doll, to obtain something

exactly fitting it! In a word, the best days of doll-keeping seem to be over, and with the simply dressed dolls, or those that their little mistresses clothed with their own busy fingers, all the best meaning of the toy is vanishing. Once the much-loved doll led to taste in arranging and fitting pieces of dress, and then to a just pleasure in the finished work neatly done—work which led to the pretty custom of cherishing and treasuring up and hugging still the dear old plaything, even when its beauty had departed. And it led also in not a few cases to better things. For instance, there was but an easy step from the pleasure of doll-dressing to that beautiful and but too rare custom of the children preparing clothing at Christmas-time for the poorest infant that could be found.

Master Ernest's toys keep pace with Miss Edith's. There was but a poor show of boys' tool-boxes to be seen in the Exhibition, which one may take as a fair index of the present fashion of playthings. Soldiers, of the new solid-lead make, were there in boxes containing hundreds—the result of which last arrangement is that, for the child, the fatigue of preparation is greater than the amusement of the game. We have seen a little boy tire of 'standing up' his men before there was even talk of the battle beginning; and his father, who had a man's perseverance and patience, set the troops in order. There were also forts elaborately made, but not permitting any play of invention in placing or managing their garrison. Instead of the good old race games—at which we ourselves have played not till all was blue, but till all was red, that being the complementary colour of the bright green board—there are nowadays circular boards covered with dark-green, on which horses run by hidden mechanism, one being destined to run faster than the other; and the only interest of the game attaching to guesses as to which is the fast horse, and consequent bets thereon—a fair introduction for Master Ernest to perilous speculation on the turf.

In the old days, Jack took a pride in securing a suitable piece of wood at the timber-yard, and slowly shaping out of it his own boat or ship, and carving every mast and yard. In these days, Ernest, when he wants to construct anything, has only to buy the various parts and put them together. Of course money is necessary, but he is never at a loss for that; and instead of saving up pence like Jack to buy wood and tools, he saves shillings and half-crowns, and purchases everything, beginning with the carved and painted hull, and going down to minute blocks and capstan and compass. Of course his ship is much finer and more correct than was Jack's of old; but it is to be doubted if he had as much real pleasure—not to speak of instruction—in putting it together as Jack had in laboriously and diligently making his. So it is with the whole range of playthings. Fancy and imagination are no longer brought into exercise by them; and these are qualities which are of no small value, and which children possess at the outset in an extraordinary degree. A taste for money is developed, and an inability to enjoy small pleasures or be amused by little things. Of those who have considered the question, there are few who will not admit that the luxurious toys of the present age are

stunting in children's minds some qualities well worth cherishing, and introducing in their stead unchildish feelings and tastes. The beautiful toys that crowd the best shops of our great cities have in many cases too much of the glitter of money behind their beauty. Their free use, and their swift advance to a greater completeness and luxury, are calculated to make Ernest and Edith less childlike than Jack and Jill—less childlike, because possessing in a far less degree three of the grand prerogatives of children—their glorious imagination, their power of being easily made happy, and their winning and enviable simplicity.

UP THE RIVER WITH A LUNATIC.

ALF DIXON, Tom Giffard, and I had gone up the river camping out; we had done our second day's work. It was early morning on the third day, glorious weather. I was in the boat, getting the steering-lines in order; Giffard and Dixon were on the bank, talking to Dr Rawle. As I understood it, the Doctor was at the head of a private asylum for lunatics. He was Giffard's friend, not mine. He had been taking a constitutional when he happened to fall in with us just as we were sitting down to our open-air breakfast; the chance meeting led to Giffard inviting him to share our gipsy meal. He did.

He was a pleasant fellow, not too old and not too young. I liked him exceedingly. We talked of things in general and of lunatics in particular. Something led to his mentioning—I think it was speaking of the cunning of a certain class of lunatics, and the difficulty of keeping them within four walls—the fact that one of his inmates had escaped a day or two previously, and had not yet been retaken. This was the more singular, as it was tolerably certain he had not gone far, and search had been made for him in every direction.

As Giffard and Dixon were saying good-bye, preparatory to getting into the boat, the Doctor laughingly said: 'Should you happen to come across him, I shall consider you bound to bring him back safe and sound. He's a man of forty-four or five, tall and bony, iron-gray hair, and has a curious habit of shewing his teeth and winking his left eye. Don't look out for a raving lunatic; for on most points he's as right as you and I. He's wrong in two things. Whatever you do, don't let him lose his temper; for whenever he does, though ever so slightly, he invariably goes in for murder—he's all but done for two keepers already. And don't talk to him of England or Englishmen; for if he should get upon his native land, he'll favour you with some observations which will make you open your eyes.'

We laughed. Alf and Tom shook hands with him, and got into the boat. We promised, if we should happen to meet him, we would certainly see him returned to safe custody. Alf stood up and shoved us from the shore; we sang out a last good-bye, and left the Doctor standing on the bank.

It was a beautiful morning. The river was delicious, clear as crystal; we could see the bottom, and every stone and pebble on it; just a gentle breeze, fanning the surface of the waters into a little ripple. We lit our pipes and took it easily.

I am a good bit of traveller, know many lovely nooks and crannies in foreign lands; I have lived abroad as much as at home; but I will match the higher reaches of our own Father Thames for beauty and for charm against any scenery in Europe. And on an early summer morning, after a spell of glorious weather, it is in all its prime; the water so cool, so clear; the banks so green, so charming; the stately trees on either side; the mansions seen over the meadows, or peeping out among the trees. You may choose your Rhine, your Garda, or your Maggiore, or your golden Bay of Naples, but leave Cookham and old Father Thames to me.

Presumably, we had come for river beauties and the camping-out; presumably; but as a matter of fact there was a young lady lived not so far ahead, a mutual friend, Lilian Travers. Separately and jointly we had a high opinion of Miss Travers, not only of her beauty, but of other things as well; and having come so far, we hoped we should not have to return until at least we had had a peep at her. Unfortunately, though we knew Miss Travers, we had no acquaintance with Mister—there was no Missis. We had met the young lady at several dances and such-like; but on each occasion she was under the chaperonage of old Mrs Mackenzie. Apparently Mr Travers was not a party-man. But Lilian had promised to introduce us to him whenever she got a chance, and we were not unhopeful she would get that chance now. So you see that little excursion riverwards had more in it than met the eye.

We went lazily on, just dipping the oars in and out; smoking, watching the smoke circling through the clear air. All thoughts of the Doctor and his parting words had gone from our minds; we talked little, and that little was of Lilian and the chances of our meeting. We had gone some two or three hundred yards; we were close to the shore; Alf could almost reach it by stretching out his oar. We were dreaming and lazying, when suddenly some one stepped out from among the trees. He was close to us—not a dozen feet away.

He was a tall man, rather over than under six feet. He was dressed in a dark brown suit of Oxford mixture; he had a stick in his hand, wore a billy-cock hat, and his coat was buttoned right up to his throat. He had light whiskers, a heavy drooping moustache, hair unusually long, iron-gray in colour. He might be a soldier retired from his profession, or an artist out painting; he certainly looked a gentleman.

We were passing on, when he raised his stick, and shouted out: 'Stop!'

It was a regular shout, as though we were half a mile from him. We stopped, although it was an unusual method of calling attention.

'Gentlemen,' he said, still at the top of his voice, 'I should be obliged if you could give me a seat. I have a long way to go, and I am tired.'

We looked at him and at each other. It was a free-and-easy style of asking a favour; but he seemed a gentleman, and an elderly one too. Common politeness dictated civility.

'I am afraid,' said Alf, 'we have hardly room; she's only built for three.'

'Oh, that doesn't matter,' he said; 'you can put me anywhere, or I'll take an oar for one of you.'

I was on the point of advising a point-blank refusal, not appreciating his off-hand manner; but Alf thought differently.

'All right,' said he; 'we don't mind, if you don't.—Steer her in, Jack.'

I steered her in. No sooner were we near the shore, than quite unexpectedly he stepped almost on my toes, rocking the boat from side to side.

'Hang it!' I said; 'take care, or you'll have us over.'

'What if I do?' he returned. 'It'll only be a swim; and who minds a swim in weather like this?'

We stared at him; the coolness, not to say impertinence of the remark, was amazing. Begging a seat in our boat, knowing it was full, and then telling us he didn't care if he spilt us into the river! He seated himself by me, setting the boat see-sawing again, crushing me into a corner; and without asking with your leave or by your leave, took the steering-lines from my hands, and slipped them over his shoulders.

'Excuse me,' I said, making a snatch at them; 'but if you'll allow me.'

'Not at all,' he said; 'I always like something to do, and I expect you've had enough of it.'

His coolness was amusing; he was impenetrable. I know I for one regretted we were such mules as to have had anything to do with him. We waited in silence a second or two.

'Come,' he said, 'when are you going to start?'

'Perhaps,' said Alf, a bit nettled, 'as you're in our boat a self-invited guest, you'll let us choose our own time.'

The stranger said nothing; he sat stolid and silent. Tom and Alf set off rowing; the stranger steered right across the stream.

'Where are you going?' said Alf. 'Keep us in.'

'I'm going into the shade; the sun's too strong.'

He had the lines; we could hardly insist on his keeping one side if he preferred the other; he took us right to the opposite bank, under the shadow of the willow-trees. For some minutes neither of us spoke. With him cramming me on my seat and ramming his elbows into my side, my position was not pleasant. At last I let him know it.

'I don't know if you are aware you are occupying all my seat.'

He turned on me short and sharp. All at once I noticed his left eye going up and down like a blinking owl; his mouth was wide open, disclosing as ugly a set of teeth as I should care to see. Like a flash, Dr Rawle's words crossed my mind: tall, strong, about forty-five, iron-gray hair; a habit of shewing his teeth and winking his left eye. Gracious powers! was it possible we had a lunatic with us unawares? I know the possibility, nay the probability of such a thing made me feel more than queer. If there is anything in the world I instinctively fear, it is mad persons. I know little of them, have never been in their company. Possibly my ignorance explains my dread; but the idea of sitting in the same boat and on the same seat with a man who—

Dr Rawle's warning: 'Don't let him lose his temper, or murder will ensue,' made me bound from my seat like Jack-in-the-box. The boat tipped

right out of the water, but I didn't care. The man was glaring at me with cruel eyes, my muscles were strung, my fists clenched; every moment I expected him at my throat.

'What the dickens are you up to?' said Alf. 'What's the matter with you?'

'Excitable temperament, hot-blooded youth!' said the stranger.

I could have said something had I chosen, but I preferred discretion; I didn't like his eyes.

'N-o—nothing,' I said. 'I think I'll sit in the bow.' I didn't wait to learn if any one had an objection, but swinging round, I scrambled past Alf, and tripped full length on to Tom's knees. The boat went up and down like a swing; it was a miracle he wasn't over.

'Is the fellow mad?' roared Alf.

At the word 'mad' the stranger rose up straight as a post. 'Mad!' he said; 'do you know, sir?' He checked himself and sat down. 'Pooh! he's only a boy.'

In passing Tom, I whispered in his ear. 'The lunatic,' I said.

'What!' said Tom right out loud.

'Hold your row, you confounded donkey! It's the man from Dr Rawle's!'

'The'—

He was going to say something naughty—I know he was; but he stopped short, and stared at him with all his eyes. Either Alf overheard me, or else the same idea occurred to him at the same moment, for he stopped dead in the middle of a stroke, and inspected the man on the steering-seat. Tom and Alf went on staring at him for a minute or more. I kept my head turned the other way to avoid his eyes. All at once I felt the boat give a great throb. I turned: there was the stranger leaning half out of his seat, looking at Alf in a way I shouldn't have cared to have had him look at me.

'What's the meaning of this insolence?' he said.

The question was not unwarranted; it could not have been pleasant to have been stared at as Alf and Tom were staring then.

'I beg your pardon,' said Alf, cool as a cucumber. 'To what insolence do you refer?'

Tom actually chuckled; I couldn't have chuckled for a good deal; it seemed to me not only impudent but risky; I couldn't forget Dr Rawle's words about his homicidal tendencies. He turned red as a lobster; I never saw such an expression come over a man's face before—perfectly demoniacal. To my surprise, he sat down and spoke as calmly and deliberately as possible.

'Thank you,' he said; 'I shall not forget this.'

There was a sound about his 'I shall not forget this,' I did not relish. Alf said nothing. Tom and he set off rowing as coolly as though nothing had happened. I extemporised a seat in the bow, and tried to make things as comfortable as possible.

I noticed, although Alf and Tom were so cool, they hardly took their eyes off him for more than a second at a time. His behaviour before their furtive glances was peculiar; he saw he was being watched; he couldn't sit still; he looked first at one bank, then at the other; his eyes travelled everywhere, resting nowhere; his hands fidgeted and trembled; he seemed all of a quiver. I expected him to break into a paroxysm every

second. If I hadn't called out, he would have run us right into the shore; when I called, he clutched the other string violently, jerking the boat almost round. I heartily wished him at Jericho before he had come near us.

No one spoke. We went slowly along, watching each other. At last he said something.

'I—I will get out,' he said, in an odd nervous way.

'With pleasure,' said Alf; 'in a minute.'

'Why not now? Why not now sir?' he said, seeming to shake from head to foot.

'Where are you going to get?—into the river?' I admired Alf's coolness, I envied him. I only hoped he wouldn't let it carry him too far.

The man glowered at him; for a moment he looked him full in the face. I never saw a look in a man's eyes like that in his. Alf returned him look for look. Slightly, almost imperceptibly, he quickened his stroke. A little lower down was a little hamlet with a well-known inn and a capital landing-stage. When we came alongside, the stranger said: 'This will do; I'll get out here.'

He turned the boat inshore. No sooner were we near enough, than he rose in his seat and sprang on to the beach. There were several people about, watermen and others. Alf was after him in an instant; he rose almost simultaneously and leapt on shore; he touched him on the shoulder.

'Now, come,' he said, 'don't be foolish; we know all about it.'

The other turned on him like a flash of lightning. 'What do you mean?'

But Tom was too quick for him; he was on the other side, and took his arm. 'Come,' he said, 'don't let's have a row.'

The stranger raised himself to his full height, and shook off Tom with ease. He then hit out right and left in splendid style. Tom and Alf went down like ninepins. But my blood was up. I scrambled on shore and ran into him, dodged his blows, and closed. I am pretty strong. He was old enough to be my father; but I found I had met my match, and more. I was like a baby in his arms; he lifted me clean off my feet, and threw me straight into the river. It was a splendid exhibition of strength.

Tom and Alf finding their feet, made for him together; and scrambling out as best I could, I followed suit. You never saw such a set-out. We clung to him like leeches. The language he used was awful; his strength magnificent; though we were three to one, he was a match for all of us. Of course the by-standers seeing a row, came up; they interfered, and pulled us off.

'Here's a pretty go!' said one. 'What's all this?'

'Stop him! lay hold of him!' said Alf; 'he's a lunatic!'

'A what?' said the man.

'He's a lunatic, escaped from Dr Rawle's asylum!'

Instead of lending a hand, the man went off into a roar of laughter, and the others joined. The stranger looked literally frantic with rage. A gentleman stepped out from the crowd. 'There's some mistake,' he said; 'this gentleman is Mr Travers of Tollhurst Hall.'

You could have knocked us all three down with a feather, I do believe. Could it be possible? Could we have been such consummate

idiots as to have mistaken a sane man for a lunatic? and that man Lillian Travers' father! I could have shrunk into my boots, I could have run away and hid myself in bed. To think that we should have dogged, and watched, and insulted, and assaulted the man of all others in whose good books we wished to stand—Lillian Travers' father! Never did three men look such fools as we did then. We were so confoundedly in earnest about it, that was the worst of all. I don't care what you say; you may think it a first-rate joke; but he *must* have been an eccentric sort of elderly gentleman. If he had behaved sensibly, if he had made one sensible remark, he would have blown our delusion to the winds.

We tendered our apologies as best we could to the man we had so insulted; but he treated us and them with loftiest scorn; and we got one after another into the boat amidst the gibes and jeers of an unsympathetic crowd. And as we rowed from the wretched place as fast as our oars would take us, we each of us in our secret heart declared we never should forget our adventure up the river with a lunatic. And we haven't. From that day to this, I have never seen Lillian Travers, nor do I wish to.

A SUMMER REQUIEM.

SPIRIT of Summer! thou whose honeyed sweets
Ne'er fail fulfilment of their promise fair;
Thou at whose smile Earth's odorous voices rise,
To fill with balmy breath the gladdened air;
Where are thy songs, thy melodies, thy lays,
That cheered our weary hearts, and soothed our pain?

Silent thy music now, thy songsters fled,
And nothing but their memories remain;
Faded thy blossoms, all thy buds decayed,
While hollow winds moan sadly through thy bowers.

Yet though thy smiling gardens bloom no more,
We'll not forget the perfume of thy flowers.
Gone are thy cloudless days; thy happy skies
Are dim and fearful now 'neath Winter's frown;
Disrobed thy trees, as the last dying leaves
From naked boughs come slowly fluttering down.

How sad to wander through thy sodden woods,
Gray with a brooding mist, damp with decay,
Where Summer's leaves lie rotting at our feet,
Or by the chilly blast are borne away.

Now faint the scent of dead and dying plants;
Now clings the fungus to the humid stone,
And croaks the frog from yonder weedy marsh,
For all the woodland happiness is gone.

If on the blackened stems some wintry ray
Athwart should fall and linger there awhile,
'Twould be but as the echo of a song,
The shadow of a once familiar smile.

Our brightest joys are ever quickest fled,
As fade the rainbow colours in the sky;
We do not prize our happiness enough;
We scarcely feel it as it passes by.

Through looking always for some joy unknown,
To-day must ever incomplete remain,
And not till past, we know how sweet it was.
Spirit of Summer, visit us again!

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.